

Remarks

In the Office Action, the Examiner noted that the claims 1-21 are pending in the application and that the claims 1-21 are rejected over a prior art reference. By this response, claims 1-2, 14 and 17-21 have been amended. Thus, claims 1-21 remain pending in the application. Applicants believe no issue of new matter should arise and entry of amendment is respectfully requested. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for the reasons indicated below.

For the sake of convenience, Applicants are not reciting in the remarks section of this Amendment, the specific amendments to the claims when combined with the remaining elements that are patentably distinguishable. Rather, Applicants direct the Examiner to the specific claims where clearly the amendments to those claims in combination with the remaining elements are asserted to be patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements in each of the independent claims is patentably distinguishable over the prior art. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. In addition, Applicants also submit that the dependent claims, when each of these claims are considered as a whole, patentably distinguish over the prior art. Withdrawal of the rejection for these reasons as well is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-16 and 18-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Fliess et al. (US Publication Number 2004/0001103), hereafter "Fliess." Applicants incorporate herein by reference the remarks contained in Applicants' response filed on August 17, 2006. Applicants submit that the combination of elements and/or steps recited in each presently pending claim, when interpreted as a whole, is patentable over Fliess.

Response to Specific Points in Office Action Dated October 16, 2006

Without conceding that Fliess discloses any of the features of the present invention, Fliess is concerned with presenting data corresponding to business objects, such as projects and resources, and presenting different types of data side by side for comparison. Fliess

teaches an “integrated business management system … [that] includes four modules: a project portfolio management module [] handles strategic level functions, a project execution module [] handles operational level functions, a staffing resource assignment module [] handles transactional level functions, and a skills management module [] handles administrative level functions.” (Paragraph [0054]) According to Fliess, the “project execution module [] can be used to **manage project data, tasks and team collaboration ... [and] support project activities such as proposing projects, ... extending projects, approving projects, canceling projects, viewing team schedules and rosters, scheduling meetings and attending on-line team meetings, communicating with team members, sharing and collaboratively generating documents, adding task documents and task comments, updating task completion percentages, changing task status, assigning roles to tasks, creating and completing project assessments, and reporting on project execution.**” (Paragraph [0055]) Nothing in Fliess suggests “a method for *group collaboration through associative filing, in projects, of electronic information ...*,” wherein “*items comprising the electronic information [are] associatively filed within one or more projects.*” (Claim 1) Fliess merely suggests that “[t]eam members can collaborate and communicate within the context of a project workspace.” (Paragraph [0053]) In addition, Fliess does not disclose the step of “storing at least one project of a plurality of projects … referencing a plurality of items …, wherein the *items are associated with ... classes [] selected from activities, people, places, objects, and time,*” as further recited in claim 1.

The Examiner further asserts that Fliess teaches “associating at least one team having at least one member with the at least one project,” as recited in claim 1. Applicants respectfully disagree. What is specifically being claimed in combination is “storing at least one project of a plurality of projects, the project referencing a plurality of items, wherein the items are associated with at least one class of a plurality of classes, wherein the classes are selected from activities, people, places, objects, and time,” and “associating at least one team having at least one member with the at least one project,” as recited in claim 1.

The Examiner refers to Figures 9, 10 and 14 to suggest that Fliess discloses the step of “the project being assigned to one of a plurality of project types, each of the project types being associated with at least a portion of the plurality of users, the users assigned as the at

least one member of the at least one team being limited to the at least a portion of the plurality of users associated with the project type assigned to the at least one project, wherein each of the project types being further associated with at least one of a plurality of business rules,” as recited in amended claim 2. Applicants respectfully disagree, particularly because Fliess merely suggests that the view in Fig. 10 “includes a project manager field [] in which an executive can type the name of a potential manager for the project.”

(Paragraph [0070]) Flies does not teach “each of the *project types being associated with* at least a portion of the *plurality of users*,” as recited in claim 2. Figure 14 in Fliess provides a view showing spending levels chart and a timeline analysis chart, wherein the “spending chart formats include spending levels by project type, location, and development phase ... [and the] timeline chart formats include timeline by project name, project type, and business area. Fliess neither teaches nor suggests that “*each of the project types being further associated with at least one of a plurality of business rules*,” as recited in claim 2.

Further, Flies discloses a staffing resource assignment module that handles transactional level functions and a skills management module that handles administrative level functions. According to Fliess, the “staffing resource assignment module [] can be used to manage ... search for and assign resources (e.g., funding, staffing) to projects, and report resource assignments,” and the “skills management module [] can be used to profile resources, ...[f]or example, ... publishing of skills and aspirations from profiles, generation and publication of knowledge terms, updating of a profile upon task and/or project completion....” (Paragraph [0056]) Nothing in Fliess suggests “*users assigned* as the at least one member of the at least one team *being limited to* the at least *a portion of the plurality of users associated with the project type assigned to the at least one project*,” as further recited in claim 2. Applicants have emphasized certain features in claim 2 as clearly not present in Fliess, as discussed above. Applicants respectfully submit that it is the combination of elements recited in each of the claims, when each claim is interpreted as a whole, which is patentable.

Examiner suggests that Flies discloses the step of “associating at least one functionality, task, job or role with the ... users assigned to the at least one team,” as recited in claim 3. Fliess discloses that the “integrated business management system can be used to

aggregate project demand across multiple base systems,” and “[p]rojects can be defined by uploading [Work Breakdown Structure] elements directly from base systems and extending these WBS elements by assigning roles and tasks.” (Paragraph [0052]) According to Fliess, once roles and task are assigned to WBS elements defining projects, “[m]anagers can use the system to find the right people for a project based on current skills and qualifications data, and employees can use the system to find the right project.” (Paragraph [0053]) Thus, Fliess teaches the opposite of “*associating at least one functionality, task, job or role with the ... users assigned to the at least one team,*” as recited in claim 3, wherein the teams are associated with projects (Claim 1).

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-16 and 18-21 are not anticipated by the cited reference and respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C § 102(e) of these claims be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Fliess in view of Dewar et al (International Publication Number WO 99/22321), hereafter “Dewar.” Applicants incorporate herein by reference the remarks contained in Applicants’ response filed on August 17, 2006. Applicants submit that the combination of elements and/or steps recited in each presently pending claim, when interpreted as a whole, is patentable over the combination of Fliess and Dewar.

Response to Specific Points in Office Action Dated October 16, 2006

The Examiner disagrees with the Applicants’ argument that Dewar is only concerned with providing means for selecting projects having related information and means for linking information and tasks related to each project, and that the “linking means is arranged so that the selection means can be selectively activated to present one or more task categories and one or more information classes in each task category.” (Page 2, lines 6-11) The Examiner further disagrees that Dewar neither discloses the need for determining keywords for the classes nor the need for associating a keyword with at least one class for at least one item. Applicants respectfully disagree. Dewar merely suggests that “when a document class

is selected the system [] presents ... radio buttons include the functions for creating a new document, removing a document," (Page 13, lines 10-14) According to Dewar, "[w]hen the new document radio button is selected the system [] presents a document template selection screen," and "[u]pon selection of a template the system [] prompts the **user to enter a document category**, recipient and document class before invoking an application program appropriate for creating the document." (Page 13, lines 15-20) Dewar does not "determin[e] at least one keyword for at least one class," as recited in claim 17. In addition, Dewar does not "associate[e] the determined ... keyword with the ... class for at least one item," as further recited in claim 17, wherein the classes are selected from activities, people, places, objects, and time (claim 1). Further, claim 17 depends directly from claim 1, and when considered as a whole is patentably distinguishable over the proposed combination of Fliess and Dewar.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 17 is unobvious over the cited reference and respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) of this claim be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that, as described above, the cited prior art does not show or suggest the combination of features recited in the claims. Applicant does not concede that the cited prior art shows any of the elements recited in the claims. However, Applicant has provided specific examples of elements in the claims that are clearly not present in the cited prior art.

Applicant strongly emphasizes that one reviewing the prosecution history should not interpret any of the examples Applicant has described herein in connection with distinguishing over the prior art as limiting to those specific features in isolation. Rather, Applicant asserts that it is the combination of elements recited in each of the claims, when each claim is interpreted as a whole, which is patentable. Applicant has emphasized certain features in the claims as clearly not present in the cited references, as discussed above. However, Applicant does not concede that other features in the claims are found in the prior art. Rather, for the sake of simplicity, Applicant is providing examples of why the claims described above are distinguishable over the cited prior art.

Applicant wishes to clarify for the record, if necessary, that the claims have been amended to expedite prosecution and/or explicitly recite that which is already present within the claims. Moreover, Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original and/or complimentary subject matter recited in the present claims in a continuation application.

Any claims that have been cancelled are hereby cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and Applicant reserves the right to further prosecute these claims in continuing applications. In addition, Applicant has attempted to claim all embodiments disclosed in the present application, and no disclaimer of any embodiments is hereby intended by the presently pending claims.

Any narrowing amendments made to the claims in the present Amendment are not to be construed as a surrender of any subject matter between the original claims and the present

claims; rather merely Applicant's best attempt at providing one or more definitions of what the Applicant believes to be suitable patent protection. In addition, the present claims provide the intended scope of protection that Applicant is seeking for this application. Therefore, no estoppel should be presumed, and Applicant's claims are intended to include a scope of protection under the Doctrine of Equivalents and/or statutory equivalents, i.e., all equivalents that are substantially the same as the presently claimed invention.

Further, Applicant hereby retracts any arguments and/or statements made during prosecution that were rejected by the Examiner during prosecution and/or that were unnecessary to obtain allowance, and only maintains the arguments that persuaded the Examiner with respect to the allowability of the patent claims, as one of ordinary skill would understand from a review of the prosecution history. That is, Applicant specifically retracts statements that one of ordinary skill would recognize from reading the file history were not necessary, not used and/or were rejected by the Examiner in allowing the patent application.

For all the reasons advanced above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections have been overcome and should be withdrawn.

For all the reasons advanced above, Applicant respectfully submits that the Application is in condition for allowance, and that such action is earnestly solicited.